[P 368, B]

973 Modern Washo seem less willing than their forebears to weave Coyote into tales but are no less conscious of his malevolent presence. Psychiatric often see visions or dream of Coyote (d'Azevedo and Merriam 1957), and quick asides about Coyote's influence are apt to come up in conversation either as tentative jokes or in seriousness. One tale of a modern occurrence involving Coyote did come my way through the kindness of Warren d'Azevedo. His informant was the brother-in-law of my own informant and, like his kinsman, a sensitive, very conscious of his Indianness and credited by other Washo with powers beyond those of an ordinary man in hunting.

[795] [787] [521] 539 [115] [756]

> "I was staying in this shack with the guy who owned it. One night he didn't come home but I kept hearing something walking around that shack. The next morning when that guy came home he was all tired out and there was Coyote tracks all around that shack. I got my gun and told that guy to stay away from me" (d'Azevedo).

773 [776] The Ag, a huge man-eating bird described in Lowie's myth number 13, is no longer alive, but according to several informants the creature's house or at least the island on which it nested can be seen by people flying over the lake because they are only a bit below the surface. Washo insist that white airplane pilots see the shape of the island daily but keep silent because they don't want to confirm an Indian story. One day on a trip around Lake Tahoe my Indian companion, a sometime leader among the Washo asked: "If we get that money from our claim do you think one of them archeologist fellas could go down under the water and find that there ag bird's skeleton?"

775 178 The foregoing paragraphs illustrate the tenacity with which Washo mythology has maintained itself among these people. The entirety of many of the myths is no longer part of the repertoire of every adult Washo, but variations, on-the-spot reconstructions, and the introduction of mythological themes into contemporary stories of a secular nature are definitely part of the oral literature of the Washo.

It is interesting to note that some aspects of Washo mythology appear to have more viability than others. Thus the Water Baby remains an important and vital aspect of modern Washo life, as does the Coyote. The twin weasels have lost much of their appeal, as has the giant Hangawuiwu. The giants of the mountains are acknowledged to be alive today but are seldom referred to, whereas Coyote and Water Baby are almost always mentioned and spoken of as living entities even by the most progressive Washo.

771 [782] [182] [121] Except for the making of offerings to nature, which may be defined as purely religious, other religious or ritual activities dealing with what we would call the supernatural are so integrated with other aspects of Washo life as to be almost inseparable. Thus in describing the religious activities of the Washo I will proceed through various phases of their life, pointing out the ritual actions which are part of Washo behavior in specific situations.

14:Stewart E-5 (1936-1938)1944 NR13 Northern Paiute NR13
Washo NT20

usually the same. Before chewing, the buttons are lined up on the hand, and a silent prayer is offered "through them." After each is masticated, it is spit into the hands and formed into a ball. While resting on the open palm, this pellet is motioned toward the fire, then thrown into the mouth. The hand remains before the mouth a moment, then is passed back over the forehead and hair. The throat and chest are rubbed with a downward motion and patted. After the peyote is swallowed, concentrating into the hand and rubbing saliva over the head are common. Frequently, Ben Lancaster and Sam Dick chew hard peyote buttons and form them into pellets for others to swallow, especially the sick, a curing prayer being offered and cedar smoke being fanned over the patient.

The drumming and singing continue, but anyone eating peyote stops the drum's progress. No one is allowed to pass between the altar and a person eating peyote or praying. Oral prayers are made through a cigarette, usually part sage, rolled by the chief, and lighted from the fire stick. Crying is common during prayers, which are given in Washo, Paiute, Shoshone, or English. The leader may pray in English, and English phrases are incorporated into Indian prayers. Singing and drumming continue during the prayers, which usually end at a moment of quiet while drum and staff are passed.

At dawn the chief rouses the drum and staff, and sends the host's wife or another woman, often his own wife, to get the water and food for the peyote breakfast. As soon as the fire chief has pushed the ash crescent toward the sand half-moon, filling its concave side, arranged the fire, and cleaned the altar and the ground around it, he also leaves to assist. When the food is at the door, the chief starts the final series of songs, the food and water being aligned between fire stick and door after his first song. The woman who brought the food kneels upon a blanket east of the last vessel. The last three songs completed, all paraphernalia are spread on handkerchiefs and scarfs, the tips of all feathers pointing toward their owner's left. Near the north end of the crescent on his altar cloth, the chief places staff, feathers, gourd, cedar bag, drum, and drumstick.

The cedarman sprinkles cedar on the fire, and the kneeling woman, by extending her arms and cupping her hands, draws its smoke to her chest and to the food. The chief, in the meantime, makes a sage-and-tobacco cigarette, which is carried to the woman by the cedarman, who also hands her the fire stick. Her prayer is one of the longest of the meeting. This and the midnight blessing are the only prayers followed by one by the chief, who uses the same cigarette from which the chief drummer and cedarman have also taken four puffs. The chief's prayer varies from his opening prayer only with a blessing for food.

As the cedarman places the cigarette butt against the crescent, the woman spills water on the ground, passes the basket to the nearest person south of the door, and takes her original place. The peyote breakfast passes around the group in the order of its arrangement between the fire and the woman: water, element the fire, fruit, boiled rice, and meat."

Water is again sprinkled over the paraphernalia and rubbed over the body," and informal conversation begins. As soon as the food goes around, the utensils are placed on the ground as before; then taken out by the fire chief. At this point the chief removes the sage and eagle feathers from his staff, takes the chief peyote from the moon, and places some paraphernalia in his satchel. The drum is dismantled by the chief drummer, the kettle containing the charcoal-blackened water and the drumstick being circulated clockwise around the meeting, each Indian touching his head, limbs, chest, and any weak part of his body with drops of water carried by the stick. Some each four drops of water from the end of the drumstick; many drink from the kettle. The staff follows the kettle for each member is held as if sighting along it; then to grasp as if to sing, shaking the chief's rattle four times.

Then the kettle reaches the chief drummer again, the fire chief collects the cigarette butts from the base of the crescent, burns them, pours any water remaining in the kettle over the sand crescent and between the crescent and the fire. This is the actual end of the meeting.

At one meeting, however, Ben carried on some "horseplay." Holding the staff as if it were a fiddle, he scraped across it with his drumstick and sang several songs. During the last, an extremely lively one, all stood, stretched, and went outside.

Everyone is instructed to return after the morning rooms: at nine or ten o'clock. The chief is in his place flanked by the other officials. Before him, west of the sand crescent and resting on a silk handkerchief, is a beaded basket. All file by, drop a contribution in the basket, shake hands

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* At Ben's meeting in Carson City, Nevada, the fruit was canned mixed mixture and the meat was boiled hamburger balls; at Sam's meeting, near Mono Lake, California, canned peaches and boiled beef were served.

* In connection with this self-sprinkling, questionably considered a baptism, the following report of Dewey Charles (Paiute of Bridgeport) is interesting: Ben "threw away that old baptism for me and gave me a new one. One Sunday morning after meeting he prayed over me and sprinkled water on my head and said that was a real baptism in the peyote religion and was better than the one I had before. Jim Street is the only other member that I know Ben baptized."